(c) whether the Nepalese currency in the cities is legal tender and is interchangeable with Indian currency?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) As per information furnished by RBI, some amount of Nepalese currency does circulate in the Indian cities touching Nepal border on account of overland trade.

(c) No, Sir.

CAG's report on disinvestment of BALCO

†858. SHRI RAMADHAR KASHYAP: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Comptroller and Auditor General of India had objected on many points in its preliminary report on disinvestment of BALCO;

(b) if so, the details of the points objected;

(c) whether a charge for fraud of Rs. 320 crores has also been made; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) to (d) The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (C&AG) had made certain observations in its Draft Inspection Report dated 4th October 2001 on disinvestment of Government Equity in BALCO. Government's reply thereto has been sent to the Office of the C&AG on 7th December, 2001.

Loans to fishermen struck by Tsunami

859. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that after four months since the Tsunami struck the Tamil Nadu coast and washed away a prosperous economy, the fishermen even now are unable to return to their profession as they have nothing to provide in the form of surety nor do they make any profits to pay back loans;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.